

# The Plantsman

WINTER 2005





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## CALENDAR

Visit [www.nhplantgrowers.org](http://www.nhplantgrowers.org) for additional calendar items.

### December

13-15 New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference; Manchester, NH; visit [www.nevbc.org](http://www.nevbc.org) for more information

### January

4-5 Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Association Winter Symposium and Trade Show; Mountainside Resort, Wallingford, CT; 802-562-0610

11-13 Mid-Atlantic Nursery and Trade Show; Baltimore Convention Center; Baltimore, MD 410-296-6959

19 Risk Management Work for Ag Professionals; Sponsored by UNH Extension; Mike Sciabarrasi; emphasis on regulations, farm liability, and biosecurity

24 NHPGA/NHLA Joint Winter Meeting

31- Feb. 2 New England Grows; Boston Convention and Exhibition Center; 508-653-3009 or [info@NEGrows.org](mailto:info@NEGrows.org)

### February

3-4 NH Farm and Forest Expo; Center of NH Holiday Inn, Manchester, NH

### March

11-19 New England Spring Flower Show Bayside Expo Center; Boston, MA; 617-933-4900 or [www.masshort.org](http://www.masshort.org)

### April

16 Easter

28 National Arbor Day

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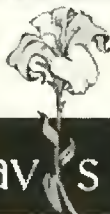
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Plants to Dye For

*Cover photo credit:  
At Pleasant View Gardens Open  
House new varieties were featured  
in beds, containers, and baskets.*

*The Plantsman* is published in early February, April, June, August, October, and December with copy deadlines on the first of each prior month. While camera-ready ads are preferred, set-up assistance is available at a nominal fee. Free classified advertising is offered as a member service. We will carry a short message (no artwork or logos) for one or two issues of *The Plantsman*.

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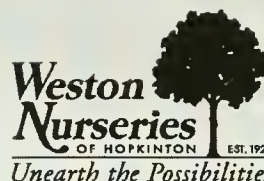


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## 2005 A Year to Remember...

BY BRETT ANDRUS

The long cold winter brought the hope of nourishing spring rains, and yes were they ever so nourishing. In 25 years I have never seen the rains last so long. The weathermen talked about a high pressure here and stalled fronts over there. I couldn't figure it all out. Then one Sunday afternoon in May as the heavens opened up once again, I discovered the answer. One of my young employees said the bad weather must be all my fault. I must have had bad thoughts and God sent his wrath. I couldn't think of what I had done, but to get this much rain it must have been pretty severe.

Then, later in the spring I must have been forgiven, the sun came back. We were all hopeful of re-cooping some of our lost spring sales. Things were looking pretty good, until the feared three letter word came, OIL. Yes they said, prices would rise beyond belief. So I started to itemize how much our industry depends on petroleum. I realized such things as poly for our greenhouses, pots and tags for our plants, even products we use in aiding the health of our crops are all in some way linked to petroleum. My wish list was getting smaller by the day. I looked at my once proud fleet of golf carts, now just mere skeletons of what they once were, and whispered a plea for just one more year. I need to put oil in the tanks this winter.



*NHPGA sponsored a golf tournament in September to benefit the NH Horticultural Endowment.*

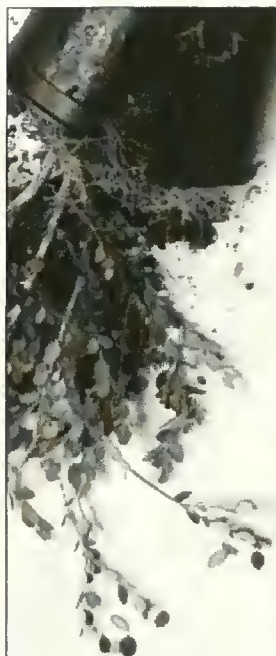
Then one night just before I was about to call Dr. Phil, I heard good news on the TV. They said the big three in Detroit had lowered earnings for the third quarter. One reason being low sales of their SUV's. Who would have thought that gas hungry vehicles and high gas prices don't mix? They will start dumping these cars quicker than Fenway Park laid sod after the Stones Concert. Somehow car manufacturers forgot about the 1970's.

Now you ask, "Where is this leading?" Unlike so many industries in this country who think the sun will always shine, we have built a horticultural industry that realizes rain always comes along at some point. Adver-

sity has taught us how to manage our businesses through good times and bad. We are constantly making modifications. We strive to grow our crops more productively and put our labor force to its best use. We arrange displays for maximum results, and target advertising to the proper market. It all boils down to one thing people say is dead, common sense. Our industry has a bountiful supply, something the top three in Detroit may want to take a look at. The great love of plants has been around longer than SUV's. This passion for plants will stand the test of time no matter what our customers maybe driving into our parking lots in the future. Yes, adversity may have taken a bite this year, but we know we don't have to react to it. We will just live with it everyday and adjust as needed.

So to does the board of the NHPGA use common sense for the direction of our membership. The dues that you send in ever year are ever so important, but that is only the first step. Your voices in letting us know what direction you would like to see us go is vital. Remember you are not just a member, but you are the NHPGA. Someone once told me life is like an Irish bar fight. You can watch, or join in and participate. Well folks, the bar is open and the beer is cold. Don't hesitate to throw the first punch. I'll still buy you a pint afterwards.





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## Young Nursery Professional Award

Ken Francoeur of Stonewall Nursery in Raymond is the NH Young Nurseryman of the year. His wholesale business specializes in perennials. Francoeur will accept this award at the NHPGA Winter Meeting in January and NE Grows later in the month. NHPGA is pleased to honor this Rockingham county grower.

## UNH Thompson School Renovates

This fall Thompson School classrooms and student lounges are undergoing updates. Total cost of the project is \$2.5 million. Windows are scheduled for replacement as well as changes to the exterior of Cole Hall. Commuters will appreciate the upgrades to the student lounge. The construction work began during the 2005 spring semester and should be mostly complete just prior to the end of the fall semester.

Dana Samson, Department Chair for the Horticulture Technology Program reports that enrollments are strong in her department. The landscaper's certificate course is also popular with students seeking a career in the green industry. Additional opportunities for real-world projects have been built into the curriculum.

## NHPGA Member Directory in the Works

An updated Membership Directory is now in production. Robert Demers is spearheading this project. The directory will include contact information for all NHPGA members and information about the product and services offered by each member. Look for distribution of the directory early in 2006.

## 2005 America in Bloom Winners

Meredith, NH earned national recognition for its floral displays.



*(left - to right) Doug Cole, Jeanie Forrester, Jennifer McKenna, Carol Granfield, and Walter Begley are shown before a display garden in Meredith.*

As a participating community in the America in Bloom program, Meredith was chosen for the top honor in the category of 5,001- 10,000 residents.

In a recent press release, Carol Granfield, Meredith Town Manager, exclaims, "This is a fantastic recognition for Meredith." She credits the town's success to the high level of cooperation between town management, local businesses, and the broader community.

The winners in nine population categories were announced at the Fourth Annual America in Bloom (AIB) Symposium and Awards Program on Saturday, September 10, at the Marriott Key Center, Cleveland, Ohio. The event was hosted by the 18 northeast Ohio communities, which have participated in AIB since its inception in 2002.

AIB is a national campaign and contest which promotes enhancing communities through beautification. In the friendly competition, communities are matched by population and evaluated on their efforts related to floral displays, urban forestry, landscaped areas, turf and

groundcover, tidiness, environmental awareness, heritage conservation and community involvement. Judges visited the communities this summer.

Nearly 50 communities from all regions of the country participated in the fourth edition of AIB. AIB's 2005 population category winners are:

- Under 5,000 – Lewes, Delaware
- 5,001 – 10,000 – Meredith, New Hampshire
- 10,001 – 15,000 – Loveland, Ohio
- 15,001 – 20,000 – Newburyport, Massachusetts
- 20,001 – 50,000 – Hudson, Ohio
- 50,001 – 100,000 – Kettering, Ohio
- 100,001 – 300,000 – Rockford, Illinois
- 300,001 or more – Grand Central Partnership, New York City, New York
- University Campus – Brigham Young University

Eight special awards were presented to communities which received high marks out of all contestants in all population categories. These include:

- Yoder Brothers
- Heritage



Preservation – Eureka Springs, Arkansas  
 Project Evergreen Landscaped Areas – Westlake, Ohio  
 American Horticultural Society Community Involvement – Logan, Ohio  
 Gardens Alive! Environmental Awareness – St. Paul, Minnesota  
 Ball Horticultural Company Floral Displays – University of Arkansas at Fort Smith  
 Scotts Company Turf and Groundcovers – Ocala, Florida  
 America in Bloom Urban Forestry – Riverside, California  
 Planting Pride Tidiness – Bartlett, Tennessee

Plans are underway for the 2006 edition of AIB. Communities can register to enter at [www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org)

Credit: America in Bloom Press Release Oct. 2005



*This display garden features AAS Winners including Celosia Fresh Look in foreground.*

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# The Green Summit - Chapter 1

BY NANCY E. ADAMS, Executive Director, NHPGA

I recently represented the NH Plant Growers Association at New England Nursery Associations (NENA) inaugural Green Summit held in early September in Lenox, Mass. Sixty-five horticultural professionals from retail, trade associations, wholesale and allied trade businesses spent 1½ days assessing their businesses and the future direction of the green industry. It was a time of reflection - time to concentrate on strategic thinking in an otherwise hectic, face-paced environment. However, I confess seeing some folks rush outdoors with their cell phones in hand during break time...guess it's difficult to pull away even for just 2 days!

I want to share some highlights from that conference. I'm labeling this Chapter 1, which intimates there will be subsequent chapters. Hope you enjoy the conference summaries.

One guest speaker was Pam Danziger, Unity Marketing, a consumer marketing specialist. Although she specializes in luxury brands, her firm has done market research on consumer buying habits in what she called the "outdoor living market" – gardening/landscaping, plant material, birding, BBQ grills, porch & patio decorations, outdoor services, outdoor furniture, lighting & sound, etc. The outdoor living lifestyle is on a strongly positive spending trend with impressive growth potential. Competition is intense for outdoor living dollars amongst garden centers, home centers and mass merchandisers, but the key competitive advantage for garden centers lies in the plants. To capitalize on this advantage, horticultural businesses should focus on their existing customers, in particular, their biggest spenders, and leverage

this strength into other outdoor living activities and pursuits including gifts and seasonal decorations. Become an expert on outdoor living!

One key message: **Shoppers are less concerned about the product they buy than the experience they receive from that purchase.** They expect good prices (combination of high value at a reasonable price), wide selection, convenient location and sometimes a place to shop for other things. Garden center and nursery retailers should concentrate on enhancing the shopper's experience by creating a unique value for them through a high level of advice and information, garden ideas & inspiration, exceptional high quality goods, better brands more carefully selected by experts, and product guarantees. Get to know your customer more intimately. Have you developed a customer database to track purchases? Are you providing a unique, value-added experience for your customers? Is your business able to demand higher prices as a result? I'm sure we've all visited businesses where we customers are seen as inconvenient intrusions in an otherwise blissful day. Is that your customer's experience?!?

Pam segments shoppers into four distinct buying attitude types:

**Sylvia the Garden Slave** - takes no joy in gardening, only does it because she has to, and spends 43% less than the average person on outdoor living. She doesn't shop at garden centers – thankfully.

**Therapeutic Thelma** – gardens for her personal pleasure – it provides meaning to her life and is therapeutic. She doesn't spend a lot of money but does take a lot of your sales staff time asking questions

and seeking advice. Thelma spends 33% less than the average person on outdoor living.

**Lounging Lisa** – finds her garden an important source of social recognition yet doesn't want to do the work herself. She spends the most on outdoor living activities – 39% more than average – and is a wonderful target for outdoor living services.

**Helen the Happy Gardener** – is your primary customer who takes utmost pleasure from gardening – a do-it-yourself person. She spends most on plants but less than Lisa on outdoor living products and services. She spends 15% more than average and offers an opportunity to translate her gardening enthusiasm into an outdoor living passion.

The key is to train your staff to recognize the types of shoppers they encounter so that they can alter their sales approach accordingly. Nurture and develop your Helen & Lisa customers. They offer the most upside profit potential.

Some final thoughts on building opportunity for garden retail sales. Adding services (design, installation, maintenance, delivery, etc.) to your garden center will appeal to high-spending Lisas and have been shown to generate three-times more revenue for garden centers than those that do not offer any services. Expand, develop and explore the outdoor living category for your garden center/nursery. After all, the future doesn't lie in growing and selling better plants but in providing an enhanced outdoor living experience for your customers through your newly reinvented *Outdoor Living Center*.

### Bay State Invasive Plants News

Around of hearings was conducted in September by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural resources on invasive species. At the public hearings, comments were solicited on a proposed ban of more than 140 plants. According to a press release from the MASS Dept., the list of plants was derived from the Federal Noxious Weed List and plants listed as invasive by the Mass. Invasive Plant Advisory Group

If adopted as is, action on these plants would take place as soon as January 1, 2006. On this date, it will be illegal to import any of the listed plants. Also all plants would be prohibited from sale on this date, with the exception of 12 plants. These 12 plants are key to the ornamental industry and to minimize the effect, a phase out period will be in place. Among the 12 species, the inventory of the herbaceous species may be sold until Jan. 1, 2007, and the woody species may be sold until Jan. 1, 2009.

Through the new proposal, the Department will retain the right to issue permits that will allow the importation, and sale of listed plants if there is a significant benefit to the public to do so and where the risks by these species can be adequately controlled. The Department anticipates that the permit authority might be needed in research situations.

Comments were accepted through September 30, 2005. For more information contact Trevor Battle, Department of Agricultural Resources, Boston, MA. A list of the species proposed for ban/phase-out is posted at <http://mass.gov.agr/farmproducts/>

proposed\_prohibited\_plat\_list.htm  
Credit: Mass Dept. of Ag Sept. '05

### Extended Daylight Savings

One feature of the National Energy Plan enacted in August is the extension of daylight savings by a month beginning in 2007. Clocks will spring ahead one hour early beginning on the second Sunday in March and fall back on the first Sunday in November. The provision is expected to promote energy savings.

Other features of the Energy Bill include tax credits to homeowners who make energy efficient improvements to their homes. The bar has been raised for energy efficiency standards in the area of consumer products. Refrigerators, air conditioners, heat pumps, and water heaters will be manufactured in compliance with these new standards.

To diversify the country's energy supply, the bill provides tax credits for new developments in the area of generating wind, solar, and biomass energy.

### SAF Promotes Flower Power

The results of three key studies, sponsored by the Society of American Florists (SAF), have been distributed through national media markets to promote the benefits of flowers. In 2001, SAF launched a fundraising campaign to spark a nationwide Public Relations program titled Flower Fundamentals. Dwight Larimer, AAS, SAF Consumer Marketing Chairman, says, "The Flower Fundamental Program is designed to educate consumers about the benefits of flowers and the expertise of professional florists."

Industry support for the program is broad based with 2,000 retailers, wholesalers, suppliers, importers, and growers contributing to the fund.

The national marketing campaign has generated 521 million consumer impressions in 136 markets, and 43 placements in popular national magazines including: Redbook, Fitness, Health, Allure, First for Women, Ladies Home Journal, Working Mother, Today's Black Woman, and Better Homes and Gardens.

The Flowers Fundamentals Program has contracted with celebrity spokesperson, Rebecca Cole from Discovery Channel's *Surprise by Design*, and developed a month-by-month floral gift giving guide.

The three key studies currently promoted in the media are:

- Emotional Impact of Flowers Study (Rutgers University, 2000) – This study received academic acknowledgement when it was published in *The Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*.
- Flowers & Seniors Study (Rutgers, 2001) This study demonstrated that flowers ease depression, inspire social networking, and refresh memory as we age.
- The Impact of Flowers & Plants on Workplace Productivity Study (Texas A & M University, 2003). This study showed that problem solving skills, idea generation, and creative performance improve substantially in workplace environments that include flowers and plants.

*Credit: SAF Press Release Sept. 2005*



### Dedication of Teaching Herb Garden at Elm Bank

The New England Unit of the Herb Society held a dedication ceremony on Tuesday, Aug 23<sup>rd</sup>, to commemorate this year's completion of the Society's Teaching Herb Garden. The Teaching Herb Garden located at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's Elm Bank Horticulture Center in Wellesley, was designed by former chair Marie Stella Brynes. Construction of the garden began in 2001 and additions to the garden over the past 4 years have included the hardscape, hedging, arbors and all

signage for the varieties of herbs.

The ceremony, which was coordinated by the Herb Society's Member Chair, Jane O'Sullivan, included garden tours and speeches by the Society's Chair Beryl Feldman and Thomas Herrera-Mishler, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

A Ginkgo tree, encircled by bench stands center stage in the herb garden. A variety of themed herb beds radiate from the center. A few noteworthy herb beds are fragrance, culinary, friendship, Native American and colonial theme garden. Since Oregano is the 2005

Herb of the year a special section of the garden is devoted to a display of different varieties of oregano. The newest bed is the ecumenical bed, featuring plants that have a religious or symbolic importance to the five major religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The public is encouraged to visit the Teaching Herb Garden and attend future Herb Society events and sales at Elm Bank.

*MASS Horticultural Society Press Release: August, 24, 2005*



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# UNH Twilight Meeting Aug. 2005

BY MELISSA MOORE

At the UNH Twilight meeting held August 16th, University researchers shared results of their most recent studies. The projects underway were right on target and in sync with market issues that drive how producers choose varieties to grow. Experienced growers know the best route to success is providing unsurpassed quality and delivering unique varieties that are early to market. Whether its cutflowers, edible soybeans, or colored bell peppers crops, with these characteristics (earliness, unique color, and flavor) will give growers a competitive advantage.

In the area of cut flowers, Cathy Neal planted more than a dozen varieties suitable for cut flowers. "My goal is to examine their flowering habits, the sturdiness of their stems, and each flower's lasting quality in a vase", says Neal. Every variety was planted at a density of 12 plants per seven foot plot. The new Celosia variety called Flamingo Feather stands out head and shoulders above the pack. Its pink flower looks like a tuft of feathers sitting on top of a graceful wand. The feathery top is light and airy and promises to hold up well in mixed bouquets. In the Rudbeckia family, Neal favors Prairie Sun. With a pale green center encircled by a ring

of lemon- yellow petals, this blooms appears like it mirrors sunshine. Prairie Sun is a crowd pleaser that will spur sales. In this ever expanding

economic difference to growers. Demand for colored peppers is strong, yet they pose a unique challenge here in the Northeast. Peppers typically need a

long season to color-up. Grube explains, "Color development requires an additional 2-3 weeks of frost-free days past mature green, and ripening fruits are increasingly susceptible to diseases, insects, and other production problems." Her study focused on identifying peppers that colored early and would be recommended for New Hampshire growers. She included 21 different varieties in her study. These varieties were grown in three different environments: open field conditions, unvented high tunnels, and vented high tunnels. Preliminary results suggest that there is not a significant difference between peppers grown in high tunnels versus open field conditions. Throughout the study, data was collected on the average number of fruits per plant, and

the average weight per fruit. Grube said, "The study will wrap up just prior to frost when the number and weight of all remaining (immature) fruits will be recorded."

At the August Twilight meeting, colored pepper varieties testing well were Ace and New Ace from Johnny's Selected Seed. Three new varieties from a Cornell breeding program



*This beautiful Prairie Sun appears to mirror sunlight. A wonderful cut flower for mixed bouquets.*

category, this new Rudbeckia is a keeper.

Becky Grube, UNH Extension Education in Sustainable Agriculture, tackled some essential questions with high-value vegetables that have the potential to make an important eco-



were showing good size and color in the trial. Blusing Beauty, an ivory colored pepper also earned positive comments.

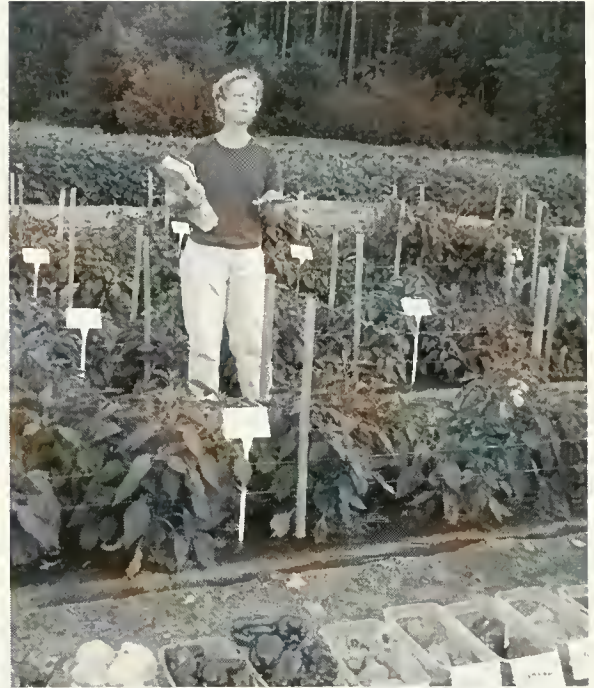
Edamame (vegetable soybeans) was the focus of a second variety trial conducted by Grube. These beans are picked when immature (pods 85% filled out). The beans can be steamed in the pod and then shelled for a great finger food, or they can be shelled and cooked just as you would green beans or peas. Edamame is gaining in popularity and can be found in grocery stores and restaurants. Bartenders are offering them as an alternative to beer nuts. This is one reason why a popular variety is named "Beer Friend." Some other varieties grown at the Woodman Farm Trials include BeSweet 2001, Envy, Black Jet, and Black Pearl. Grube explains, "Some varieties are highly sensitive to photoperiod and will not blossom and set pods until very late in the growing season." Grube set out to identify varieties with early pod set that would be harvest ready in a typical NH growing season. For more information on these trials contact Becky Grube at 603-862-3203 or [becky.grube@unh.edu](mailto:becky.grube@unh.edu).

Pumpkin and squash, the staples of a grower's fall harvest, were featured at the Twilight Meeting. Brent Loy has conducted breeding trials and selected for compact growth habit, and flavor. In the pumpkin trials, Loy has successfully developed a pumpkin with tasty snack seeds.

At the close of the program, participants were invited to tour the new Otho Wells Classroom. This class-

room space was recently renovated to provide a spacious conference room at the Woodman Farm. Otho Wells, a former UNH Extension Vegetable Specialist, thanked everyone for their contributions to the project.

It was satisfying to stroll the grounds and see all the work that was underway. For a grower to replicate similar studies on their own would not be feasible. To learn more about any of these studies visit the website <http://ceinfo.unh.edu> and follow the links for agricultural resources.



*Becky Grube discusses her research studies at Woodman Farm aimed at improving earliness in high-value crops for vegetable growers.*



*Celosia Flamingo Feather is a smart choice for cut flower growers.*



*John Hart left (Woodman Farm Manager) congratulates Otho Wells, retired UNH Extension Educator on the completion of the new Otho Wells classroom at Woodman Farm.*



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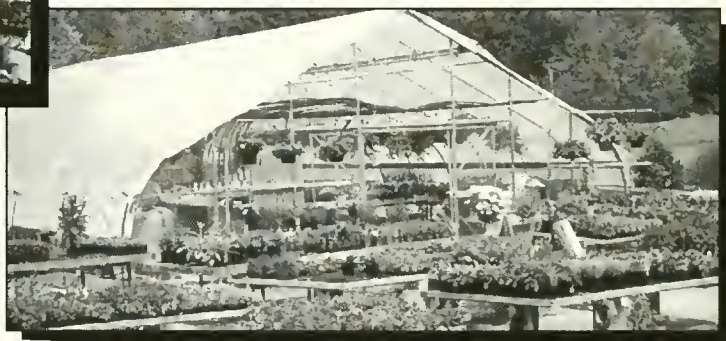


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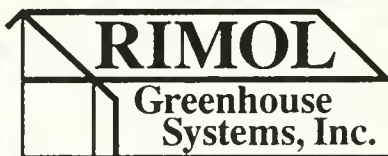


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## 2005 Open House Events

BY MELISSA MOORE

Companion foliage adds exceptional texture and color to garden plantings. At Open House events held this summer, foliage plants captured the spotlight. Burgundy and black foliage were popular offerings in a range of heights. In the low-growing, mounded category, Pleasant View Garden's Heuchera Dolce "Licorice" was a standout. The large leaves in deep burgundy are an exceptional foliage accent. The line-up of Oxalis species also from PVG-Proven Winners includes two burgundy varieties titled "Charmed Wine" and "Charmed Velvet". For a splash of color in containers or a shady bed these plants are new introductions with a bright future. The Oxalis species offer unique leaf shapes with petite, white flowers. They will reach a maximum height of 10"-14". Ajuga 'Black Scallop' is another purple foliage plant that has a mat growth habit and is dense with leaves.

In the mid-range category, an unsurpassed variety for color is Pseuderanthemum atropurpureum Rubrum showcased in display gardens at D.S. Cole Growers. This plant, featured in D.S. Cole's Designer series, has won some distinctive honors around the country. It was named a top-10 winner in the People's Choice competition at the 2004 East Texas A & M Plant Trials. It prefers full sun and will reach maximum heights of 2'-3'.

Whenever a planting calls for both height and foliage color, Cordyline Red Sensation and Pennisetum Rubrum are must-have plants. These upright varieties will stand alone or in combination containers. Cordyline



*Pulmonaria "Gaelic Spring" prefers shade but will light up its spot with its variegated pattern of lime green and dark green coloration.*

tolerates both full sun to partial shade, but the ornamental grass Pennisetum Rubrum requires full sun. Both of these choices have the potential to reach heights of 3 feet. A jumbo, black foliage plant that is exceptional in height and leaf size is Colocasi Black Magic. With the common name, Elephant Ear it's no surprise the Colocasi's best feature is its broad leaves.

In recent years, the family of green foliage plants has grown by leaps and bounds. Some outstanding introductions that have a trailing growth are Lysimachia 'Goldilocks' and Vinca Vine 'Illumination'. Other noteworthy, mounding foliage plants include all the Plectranthus species. For the 2005-2006 growing season, two exceptional foliage plants joined this elite group. From PVG's Proven Winners line-up comes the perennial Pulmonaria "Gaelic Spring". It's a shade-lover, but will brighten its surroundings with its lime green color and heavily variegated pattern in shades of green. Pulmonaria is a sure bet to fly

off the benches next spring. In shady beds, it is a dependable performer that fills out space with a compact, mounding form. The Euphorbias are unrivaled in growth habits. Whether it's the variety 'Diamond Frost', 'Kalipso' or 'Efanthia', all sport unique foliage and early spring flowers.

At the Open House events held in August, both Loudon Growers displayed many new ornamental grasses. Sedges showed up in the greatest number. Pleasant View Garden showcased Carex "Leather Leaf Sedge" and Carex "Toffee Twist" in stand alone pots or combination containers. At D.S. Cole Grower's Inc, Carex, "Red Rooster" was a multi-use plant in beds and container plantings. These grasses supply great vertical interest wherever they're planted. Gardeners looking for something new to try are bound to be enthralled with all the new introductions in this category. Ornamental grasses are low maintenance and dependable. Gardeners will find success and great visual impact with this plant family.

No Open House would be complete without a sampling of new flowering annuals and perennials. Some fun plants that sport pleasing blossoms are new introductions in the Lobelia family. The varieties Laguna 'Sky Blue' and 'White' have demonstrated that they are dependable, easy-care performers. The Yubi Series of Portulacas offered by Pleasant View Gardens includes eight different colors. These versatile plants are suited for the landscape, baskets, containers, or as ground cover. In the landscape they perform just as they are described in the catalog - "offering dramatic im-



## MEMBER PROFILE

pect with their almost iridescent colors." A mass planting of these would really stop traffic.

The Gaura family boasts long-blooming varieties that display light and airy flowers in shades of white and pink. The persistent reblooming characteristic of these plants is one of its best features. The delicate blooms on long, arching stems give a planting some vertical interest that's not overpowering.

Growers will want to get their customers reacquainted with Phlox. The bold new colors are dramatic and the traditional flower forms have won top-votes in plant trials across the country. PVG's Phlox Intensia Neon Pink and Intensia Lavender Glow will have gardener's ripping up sod to accommodate these new choices.

In D.S.Cole's All-America Selections Display gardens the Zinnia 'Magellan Coral' was superb. It's deep, uniform color and fully double blooms are just two of its outstanding characteristics. This zinnia flowers all summer and doesn't need to be dead-headed. New foliage and blooms will grow up and cover the spent blossoms. 'Magellan Coral' is an easy care plant with basic requirements. It was named an AAS flower award winner in 2005 along with Gaillardia Aristata 'Arizona Sun'. Both flowers will bloom over long periods throughout the growing season. 'Arizona Sun' is suitable for use in mixed annual bouquets. Butterflies find its red and gold coloring alluring. The 2001 AAS Bedding Plant Winner, Eustoma 'Forever Blue' was at home in its full sun location. The graceful 2 1/2 inch blooms above dense foliage make it stand out from the crowd.

During an Open House event, growers can get a good sense of plant size and growth habit for many varieties. Whether they're planted in beds or featured alone in containers,



*In a single pot, this sedge creates vertical interest and dramatic impact.*



*This Zinnia is superb in color and bloom size! Try Magellan Coral Zinnia for cut flowers of in garden beds and containers.*



*In containers: these oxalis are looking vigorous. Their unique color and shape are appealing.*



*This black foliage plant is dramatic. It's a coast-to-coast favorite for full sun plantings.*

there's no substitute for the real thing. They make the thumbnail photos in the catalogs come alive! No doubt this up-coming winter will be easier to tolerate once the seed and young plant catalogs arrive. The best recipe for beating the winter blues is to pour over plant catalogs and dream about

new varieties for the upcoming growing season. Both companies offer extensive resources for additional information on these new plants. You can browse the virtual catalogs over the Internet or hold a paper copy in your hand. Either way, check out what's new from these two NH growers.





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# 2006

## All America Selections Winners

A new trial category was created for the 2006 contest. The goal was to test flower's performance in cool conditions. The AAS Cool Season Bedding Plants Trial is conducted in the fall and spring during 14 months of testing. AAS Cool Season Bedding Plant Judges evaluate entries in the greenhouse and outdoors for improved performance. Qualities such as length of bloom, cold tolerance, winter hardiness and spring recovery are evaluated.

Flowers that can be tested in the Cool Season Bedding Plant trial category are alyssum, bellis, calendula, campanula, ornamental cabbage or kale, carnation, delphinium, dianthus, lobelia, lupine, pansy, poppy, ranunculus, snapdragon, stock, sweet pea, or viola.

Gardeners in the South can rely upon Cool Season Bedding Plant award winners to perform during the winter months. In the North, gardeners will be able to use these AAS Winners and extend the colorful growing season into the fall.

The two Cool Season Bedding Plant Award Winners are:

### Diascia 'Diamonte Coral Rose'

Botanical name: *Diascia integrinma*. The first F1 hybrid diascia, 'Diamonte Coral Rose' is improved for early flowering, branching habit, flower production,

and length of bloom. 'Diamonte Coral Rose' will flower within 60-70 days. The 8- to 10-inch height and 18-inch spreading habit is perfect for mixed containers where a cascading plant is desirable, or as a low edging plant in a sunny garden. The one-inch rosy coral



blossoms are produced in spikes on all sides of the plant. The frost tolerant plants can be literally covered with blooms.

### Viola, 'Skippy XL Red-Gold'

Botanical name: *Viola cornuta*. This is the first *Viola cornuta* to win the prestigious AAS Award. The improved qualities are flower size, flower colors and freedom of bloom. The large, 1 ½ inch, round flower appears to be a

pansy, but it's a viola. The colors on its bloom were designed by an artist. They are ruby red with violet red shading below the golden yellow face containing penciling or whiskers. The whiskers are an attribute of violas. AAS Judges noticed the strong, dense plant which exhibited heat tolerance combined with winter hardiness with protection. These two traits result in improved freedom of bloom and length of the flowering season. When mature, the plants will spread 8 inches and remain dwarf, about 6 inches tall.

Two Varieties to Capture top honors in the Bedding Plant Award Category are:

### Dianthus F1 'Supra Purple'

Botanical name: *Dianthus interspecific*. 'Supra Purple' bloomed early and exhibited exceptional garden performance to win the AAS Bedding Plant Award. This interspecific cross results in hybrid vigor for improved heat tolerance and prolific bloom. The 1.5-inch single purple flowers are lacy, with highly fringed petal edges. In full sun, 'Supra Purple' will reach 12 inches tall with an upright bouquet habit spreading 10 inches. 'Supra Purple' flowers can be cut for fresh arrangements or enjoyed in the garden during the long flowering period. From sowing seed to bloom will be about 10-12 weeks.

Nicotiana F1 'Perfume Deep Purple'

Botanical name: *Nicotiana x Sanderae*. 'Perfume Deep Purple' is named for the delicate evening fragrance that will charm the senses. This variety was bred for the scent and unique deep purple flower color. The single, 2-inch star-shaped flowers are produced in abundance. Plants can reach 20 inches and spread 15 to 18 inches in a full sun garden location. 'Perfume Deep Purple' readily adapts to containers, or a semi-shade garden planting. Easy to grow and undemanding, 'Perfume Deep Purple' seed and plants will be available in garden centers.

The three Flower Award Winners are: Ornamental Pepper 'Black Pearl'

Botanical name: *Capsicum annuum*. 'Black Pearl' is a unique ornamental pepper with pure black leaves when grown in the sun. 'Black Pearl' also describes the small, black shiny peppers born upright on the plant, that are similar to pearls. The young plants will have green leaves when grown indoors or in a greenhouse, but turn black in the sun. The vigorous plants are quite heat tolerant and will grow to 18 inches tall, spreading about 12 to 16 inches. 'Black Pearl' is easy to grow without serious disease or insect problems. Use 'Black Pearl' plants as the centerpiece in a container with other mixed annuals. The peppers turn red when mature and are edible but fiery hot!



*Dianthus* F1 'Supra Purple'



*Salvia Farinacea* 'Evolution'

Botanical name: *Salvia farinacea*. 'Evolution' expands the color range of

*Salvia farinacea*. The 6- to 7-inch flower spikes are violet, distinctly different from blue. 'Evolution' is a medium height annual reaching 16 to 24 inches tall and spreading 16 to 19 inches. Gardeners who search for plants with minimal maintenance should reserve space for 'Evolution.' When planted in fertile soil, irrigation is the only requirement for 'Evolution' to flower consistently. Water efficiency tests in Colorado show *Salvia farinacea* plants are drought tolerant. 'Evolution' plants are undemanding with few disease or pest problems.

Zinnia F1 'Zowie Yellow Flame'

Botanical name: *Zinnia elegans*. This AAS Winner will wake up any garden with flowers that flame with color. 'Zowie! Yellow Flame' begins a new class of semi-tall zinnias with a novel bicolor pattern. Each 3- to 4-inch semi-double bloom contains a scarlet/rose center with yellow petaledges. The color combination is uniformly intense, like a yellow flame. Expect flowering plants in about 8 to 10 weeks from sowing seed. Perfectly adapted to larger containers, use 'Zowie! Yellow Flame' as a focal point and add other annuals to create a flaming "Hot" color combination. In a sunny garden, mature plants will reach 24 to 29 inches tall, spreading 26 to 27 inches. The zinnia flowers are excellent as cut flowers.

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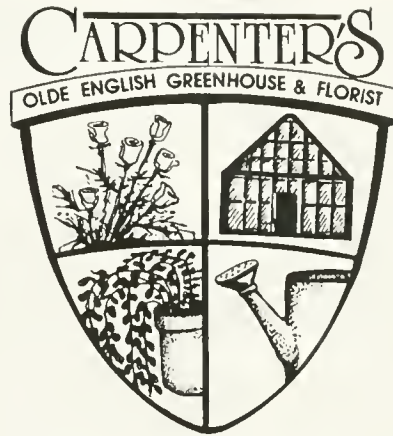
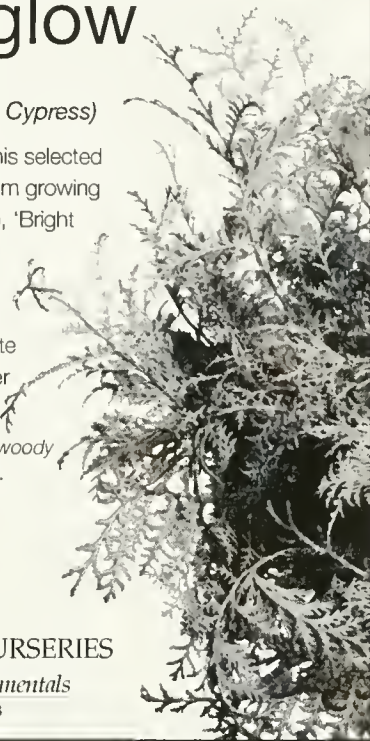


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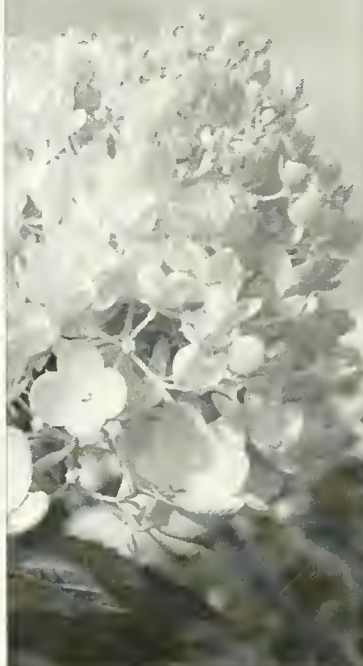


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# Plants To Dye For (or, Natural Plant Dyeing)

BY MADDY PERRON

**T**o some, the definition of an herb is any useful plant. For years, creative individuals have studied plants and their varied parts to see what raw materials can be derived from them. Some are used in cooking, medicines, crafts, and even as dyeing agents for fibers and fabrics.

Using plants for natural dyeing is an ancient craft that dates back to even before people began to spin yarn and weave cloth. Plant juices and colored earth were used as a colorant to stain the skin. A blue dye from the woad plant was used by the ancient Picts to frighten the enemy. The North American tribes used plants called puccoons to draw red decorative patterns on their skin. Walnut hulls were used in Europe to darken the skin for traveling into unfriendly territory.

Most dye plants were discovered thousands of years ago, when people communed with the outdoors, investigating everything in nature. This way many plant uses were discovered through trial and error. Wild harvesting for nourishment, medicines, weaving and dyeing, was a way of life.

Through tradition, certain colors ended up being cultural symbols of religion and class status. The garbs of kings and priests were dyed with the choice, rare colors such as blue and purple that were costly and difficult to obtain. Through tradition, colors have continued to symbolize events such as red and green for Christmas, orange and black for Halloween, pink for baby girls and blue for boys.

Dyeing was a skilled craft among

the ancient Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. In the Middle Ages, professional guilds were started in the textile business. There was much rivalry between guilds and some dyers tried to steal trade secrets. In colonial U.S. the dyer's trade was again performed by trained craftsmen, having learned their skill in European dye shops. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, synthetic dyes came into use and commercial dye workshops used large vats to handle long bolts of fabric. There were still pioneer women who dyed their own homespun yardage, but those who could afford to would purchase finished fabric. Few people in this day and age attempt to dye their own fiber or fabric.

I had the fortunate opportunity to interview a woman here in New Boston who had years of experience at natural dyeing. Cheryl came to my house well equipped with samples of wool, some of which she had actually spun herself. She had cards with pieces of yarn tied to the edges in many colors and shades with notations on how each color was obtained. Cheryl once worked at a farm museum in Michigan where she gave instruction on natural dying. Plants were wild harvested and heated up to extract the desired colors. Dressed in period garb, she worked over a campfire, dipping wool into a cauldron of prepared dye and explaining the details of plant dyeing. When dyeing, a mordant ( mord meaning to bite ) is added to the dye bath to help penetrate or "bite" into the fiber. The most popular mordant is a combination of alum and cream of tartar. Many mordants are metallic in

nature such as copper, tin, iron, and chrome. Vinegar can heighten the color, especially reds. Ammonia has the ability to draw the color out of the plant materials, especially grasses and lichen. Different mordants used with the same plant material can obtain a different shade of the same color, even in some cases, a totally different color.

Wild crafted materials used in dyeing include herbs, flowers, grasses, lichen, berries, bark and even insects. Shades of red can be obtained from sumac, mountain cranberry, pokeweed berries, madder, blackberries, lichen and cochineal (insects). Yellows and golds are available in cosmos, coneflower, yarrow, coreopsis, onionskins, and rhododendron leaves. Carrot tops as well as evernia (a lichen ) with copper sulfate as a mordant produce a nice green dye. Blues are the most difficult colors to obtain with woad and indigo being the main sources.

I was amazed at all the different shades of yellow, gold, green and rust as well as all the variations due to different mordants. Mother Nature has provided us with quite an extensive palette of colors.

My chat with Cheryl turned out to be very informative. I even finagled an invite to her next dyeing party, where her spinner and weaver friends experiment with different plant materials. Her enthusiasm was contagious and I'm anxious to meet some of her friends. After all, they are a dyeing breed.

*Maddy Perron is a Master Gardener with a special interest in herbs.*

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